

DH Policies DESIGN & HERITAGE



POLICY DH1 THE BUCKINGHAM DESIGN CODE

A. Development proposals will be supported provided they have full regard to the design guidelines and codes, as set out in the Buckingham Design Code Report attached as Appendix C.

1. There are distinctive features of Buckingham that shapes its character. These features are set out in the Buckingham Design Code Report attached at Appendix C. The Code is an integral part of the policy but is extensive and the document is therefore attached as an appendix for representational purposes only. Its content is given full effect through the provisions of the policy by placing additional local emphasis to the design quality principles of VALP Policies BE2 and BE1 in respect of the characteristics of the Buckingham Conservation Area ('The historic core'). It therefore carries the full weight of the development plan in decision making and is not subordinate or supplementary guidance carrying lesser weight.
2. The policy requires that applicants should demonstrate that they have full regard to the design principles and guidance the Code contains as relevant to the location of their proposals. It is important that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making. This is in response to new developments since the 1940s within or adjoining the historic core failing to recognise the character or local distinctiveness of the area. Where a proposal does not follow the requirements of the Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made.

POLICY DH2 LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

A. This Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following buildings and structures as Local Heritage Assets, as shown on the Policies Map:

- A. Four Terraced Villas, Brackley Road, #1-4**
- B. Three Terraced Villas, Brackley Road, #5-7**
- C. Two Semi-detached Villas, Brackley Road, #8-9**
- D. Two Semi-detached Villas, Brackley Road, #10-11**
- E. “VR” Post boxes, Hunter Street, University of Buckingham**
- F. Franciscan Building, Verney Park Campus, University of Buckingham**
- G. St Bernadine’s Church & Presbytery, Chandos Road**
- H. Troughs, Cornwalls Meadow**
- I. 1930s Building, The Buckingham School**
- J. Old Churchyard, Manor Street**
- K. Chandos Road Building, University of Buckingham**
- L. The Buckingham Arm of the Grand Union Canal, Bourton Meadow**

B. The effect of a development proposal on the significance of an identified Local Heritage Asset should be taken into account in determining planning applications. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect Local Heritage Assets, a balanced judge-

ment will be required, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

1. The policy identifies as Local Heritage Assets a number of buildings and structures in the neighbourhood area that have local heritage importance, either because of their architectural/historical/social, etc value.
2. In that regard, Policy DH2 is intended to inform decision makers of the presence of what are technically referred to as ‘non-designated heritage assets’ when judging the effects of a development proposal in line with §209 of the NPPF and VALP Policy BE1. A description of each building on the list is included in Appendix D. ‘Listed Buildings’ are already subject to protection by the Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas Act 1990 and by national policy as designated heritage assets and are not therefore identified in this policy.

POLICY DH3 RETROFITTING IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

A. Proposals which would result in considerable improvements to energy efficiency, carbon emissions and/or general suitability, conditions, and longevity of existing buildings in the Conservation Area (as shown in the Policies Map) will be supported, with significant weight attributed to those benefits.

1. The first objective of Buckingham Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan is to reduce energy demand, improve energy efficiency and convert to renewable, low or zero carbon technologies for energy and heat. This policy will encourage local residents to use deep retrofitting as a way to reduce their carbon footprint and help save energy and money in heating and maintaining their homes and other premises.
2. 20% of total UK carbon emissions comes from existing (rather than new build) homes but heritage and architectural constraints can make this challenging, particularly for residents living in properties located within the Conservation Area, to make changes.
3. Applicants who wish to submit proposals for properties within the Conservation Area are strongly advised to use the methodology set out in the Architects Climate Action Network (ACAN) Climate Emergency Conservation Area Toolkit (February 2023 or subsequent edition) which can help facilitate low carbon retrofitting.
4. In December 2023, the Government changed the permitted development rights around installing solar panels on buildings in the Conservation Area. This change only relates to solar panels, so Policy DH3 is still necessary to demonstrate wider support for retrofitting beyond this.

POLICY DH4 ADDRESSING THE PERFORMANCE GAP

- A. All planning permissions granted for new and refurbished buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted and will include a planning condition to require the provision of a Post Occupancy Evaluation Report to the Local Planning Authority within a specified period, unless exempted by Clause B. Where the Report identifies poor energy performance and makes recommendations for reasonable corrective action, the applicant must demonstrate that those actions have been implemented before the condition will be discharged.**
- B. Buildings proposed to be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m²/year will not be subject to the provisions of Clause A. Where schemes maximise their potential to meet this standard, by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character area.**
- C. All development should be 'zero carbon ready' by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.**

D. A Sustainability Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policy (except for household applications). The statement should include a passive design capacity assessment to demonstrate how opportunities to reduce the energy use intensity (EUI) of buildings over the plan period have been maximised in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic information on the intended use, occupancy and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.

E. All planning applications for major development are also required to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life.

1. The UK Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency in May 2019 and Buckingham Town Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. The policy encourages energy efficient homes to the Passivhaus standard and post occupancy evaluation for homes not delivered to this standard to ensure energy efficiency as promised in the design stages.
2. There is a growing evidence base to suggest that buildings do not perform as well as anticipated at design stage. Findings demonstrate that actual energy consumption in buildings will usually be twice as much as predicted. This passes on expensive running and retrofitting costs to future occupants. Clause A of the policy therefore requires that every building in a consented scheme is subject to a Post-Occupancy

Evaluation (POE) including actual metered energy use, and to submit the report to the local planning authority. This provision is implemented by a planning condition being attached to the planning permission, which will only be discharged once the report has been submitted and any recommended actions to rectify any performance gap with the design stage assessment are carried out by the developer. There is no current adopted development plan policy which seeks to deal with the performance gap. The Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been mindful of the provisions of §157 of the NPPF on supporting the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

3. Passivhaus certified schemes, or those at an equivalent standard, cannot fail in this way, hence they are not subject to Clause A and will not require a POE report. To further incentivise the use of the Passivhaus, or equivalent standard, Clause B of the policy acknowledges that there may sometimes be a trade-off between its objectives and local design policy. Although meeting these standards ought not to compromise a scheme fitting in with the character of a local area, on occasions this may be the case. It therefore allows for some degree of flexibility in meeting the Buckingham Design Code. Proposals seeking to apply the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) must also be able to demonstrate that the Passivhaus standard can be achieved. Prior to commencement a 'preconstruction compliance check' completed by a Passivhaus Designer accredited by the Passive House Institute (PHI) will be required and secured by condition. Upon completion a Quality Approved Passivhaus certificate for each building will be required prior to occupation, again secured by condition.
4. Clause C of the policy requires developers to ensure they address the Government's climate change targets and energy performance at the very initial stages of design. 'Zero Carbon Ready' by design means making spatial de-

cisions on layout and orientation of buildings at the outset to maximise the passive design benefits ('free heat') of a site and avoids leaving this to technical choices and assessment at the Building Regulation stage, by which time the opportunity may have been lost. Applicants are directed to the Net-Zero Carbon Toolkit created by Cotswold District Council and two partner councils, West Oxfordshire District Council and Forest of Dean District Council. The toolkit is available as a resource for private and public sector organisations to use and adopt.

5. Clause D requires a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate compliance with the policy. Along with the passive design capacity assessment, it is anticipated that designers will demonstrate compliance using a design for performance methodology such as the PHPP or CIBSE TM34 Operational Energy. Achieving this level of performance will make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change that the Neighbourhood Plan can help deliver. It appears that many developers and housebuilders are 'pricing in' the need to meet such standards within the next five years anticipating that the Government will need to make national requirements as part of its climate change obligations. This new information requirement need not be an unreasonable expectation of even the smallest schemes for new buildings.
6. Finally Clause E of the policy requires major development proposals to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emissions Assessment, RICS Methodology is preferred. The assessment will enable the design team to understand and respond to the lifetime consequence of their design decisions and to design for adaptability, longevity and disassembly, contributing to resource efficiency (as per Clause C of the policy) and

the 'circular economy'. These requirements will be added to the additional supporting documents list of Buckinghamshire County Council for applications in Buckingham until such a time that there is an authority-wide requirement. Every new build or redevelopment project in Buckingham provides an opportunity to make a difference and a contribution towards meeting our climate change targets for 2050.

7. The policy complements VALP Policy C3 which encourages development schemes that achieve greater energy efficiency.

